

## THE BUDDHA AND SHINRAN

### I

The teaching of the Buddha as is recorded in the Āgamas as well as in the Vinaya texts is quite plain and does not necessarily require the comments of the Abhidharma literature; for it simply consists in the Fourfold Noble Truth, the Twelve Chains of Causation, the Eightfold Path, and other lessons, whereby the monks were mentally disciplined so as to come finally to the realisation of Nirvana. The main object of the teaching thus was to free oneself from the bondage of worldly desires and enjoyments and to attain a life of moral purity, wisdom, and power. That this was the gist of primitive Buddhism so called is attested by the Pali Buddhist texts and the Four Āgamas in Chinese translations.

This being so, how did the teaching of Mahayana Buddhism develop from such a comparatively simple system of thought? This is the natural question raised by any critics in touch with the progress of modern textual studies of Buddhism. The wide gap, while only apparently existing between the Mahayana and the Hinayana, caused many devout followers of the Buddha to turn away from the former. According to the Mahāvansa, the orthodox Buddhists of Ceylon went so far as to burn all the Mahayana texts introduced there from the main land, and this happened more than once. But the object of the present article is not to discuss the compilation of the Buddhist texts of various schools;\* it is rather to trace the reason why such Mahayana texts as the Sukhāvatī-vyūha-Sūtra had to grow out of the religious consciousness of the primitive Buddhists, and further to expound

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\* Cf. Professor Uyi's article, "On the Development of Buddhism in India," *The Eastern Buddhist*, Vol. 1, Nos. 5 and 6.

the teaching of Shinran, who popularised by means of the Sukhāvati doctrine the deep truth most inwardly realised by the Buddha.

## II

The teaching of Shinran which is based on the Sukhāvati-vyūha is essentially faith in Amida, in which are included all merits and from which eternal life and ideals have a start; and this faith is obtained by conversion and confession. By conversion is meant a religious experience in which the whole system of mental life gets a thorough renovation, and by confession I mean the feeling of shame for one's sinful life and that of gratitude for salvation. It goes without saying that here is already the recognition of Amida as saviour and the awakening of faith as something given to one from the loving hand of the Buddha.

Having thus defined Shinran's teaching, let us now consider the primitive group of Buddhists as described in the Vinaya texts and the Āgamas. It is evident that this group was composed of Bhikshus, Bhikshunis, Upāsakas, and Upāsikās. Naturally the first two elements occupied the most important position as orthodox followers of the Buddha, who abandoned the home life to devote themselves exclusively to the attainment of spiritual deliverance. They were therefore highly revered by the lay-disciples as one of the Three Treasures. But the lay-disciples (Upāsakas and Upāsikās) were not excluded from the Brotherhood inasmuch as they could also attain to spiritual realisation. This is shown by the following passage from the Samyukta Āgamas, XXXIV: "O Gautama, if this Dharma is attainable by Gautama only and not by the Bhikshus and Bhikshunis, this life of sanctity is imperfect. If this is not attainable equally by the Upāsakas and Upāsikās, whether they are leading an ascetic life or a life of pleasure, the Dharma is imperfect. But as it is

attainable universally by all kinds of people, this life of sanctity is perfect. O Gautama, all the waters of the Ganga tend and are directed toward the ocean and stay there where they are poured into it; so it is with the followers of Gautama; whether they are homeless monks or householders, they all tend and are directed towards Nirvana and stay there after they are poured into it."

What kind of religion was it then that was embraced by householders? When Yaśa left his home to follow the path of the Buddha shortly after the establishment of Buddhism, Yaśa's father pursued him but was converted to Buddhism and became the first lay-disciple of the Buddha. He expressed his faith in the following formula:

"I take my refuge in the Buddha, in the Dharma, and in the Sangha; may the Buddha receive me from this day forth while my life lasts as a disciple who has taken his refuge." (*Mahāvagga*.)

Here we see this formula used by the first lay-disciple of the Buddha was that of the "Holy Triad," which means that the lay-disciple confessed his faith in taking refuge in the Three Treasures (*Triratna*).

In the Samyutta-Nikāya, (Vol. I, p. 25.) we have the following:

"Faith is the 'other I', the mate of men.  
Thence, if he tarry not in disbelief,  
His shall be followers and fair renown,  
And when he quits this frame to heaven he goes."\*

The remarkable expression used in this verse is, "Faith is the other I." In other words, when we have faith, the "ego" ordinarily regarded as one's own turns into the other

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\* Saddhā dutiyā purisassa hoti,  
No ce assaddhiyam avatitthati,  
Yaso ca kitti ca tatvassa hoti,  
Saggam ca so gacchati sarīram pahāyā ti.

ego not belonging to the original self; is this not conversion, the turning of one thing into another?

Again we read in the Samyutta Nikāya, (LV, p. 21): "Mahānāma said to the Buddha: 'While Kapilavastu is a flourishing city, the path leading to the monastery is lonely, and when I come back into the city at night, all by myself, after serving the Buddha, the feeling of fear often overcomes me taking my thought away from the Three Treasures. If I happen to die at this moment, there is a retrogression.' To this replied the Buddha, 'Your everyday faith will not be interfered with by the conditions of death.'"

A little further down (p. 22), *op. cit.*, we have, "When the faith in the Three Treasures is established in your daily life, it is like the tree that will fall in the direction where it used to lean."\*

When one's faith is firmly established once for all in his everyday life, the Buddha assures us that there will be no danger of losing it altogether even if we die assailed by fear, anger, and other uncomfortable feelings. The Buddha-ego has replaced the human ego at the time when we have awakened to the life of faith and realised the turning of thought in ourselves. Whatever disturbances that may take place on the surface of our consciousness are like the waves of the ocean whose depth remains forever calm and serene. This is why Shinran emphasises so much the importance of having one's faith firmly established in his daily life.

What is the content of such faith then?

"Mahānāma asked the Buddha, 'What is the Upāsaka?'

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\* ....摩訶男來詣佛所... 白佛言·世尊·此迦毘羅衛國安穩豐樂人民熾盛我每出入時衆多翼從·狂象·狂人·狂乘常與是俱·我自恐與此諸狂俱生俱死忘於念佛念法念比丘僧·我自思惟·命終之時·當生何處·佛告摩訶男·莫恐莫恐·命終之後不生惡趣... 譬如大樹順下順注順輸若截根本當墮何處·摩訶男·汝亦如是... 汝已長夜修習念佛念法念僧若命終時此身若火燒若棄塚間... 而心意識久遠·長夜正信所薰戒施聞慧所薰初識上昇向守樂處...

Replied the Buddha, 'He is the one who takes refuge in the Three Treasures.'

"'What then is the faith of Upāsaka?' Asked again Mahānāma. To this the Buddha said, 'It is to believe in the Bodhi (supreme knowledge) of the Tathāgata.'"\*

By this we know what is to be understood by the lay-disciple's faith, for it is believing in the Three Treasures of Buddhism, which is in turn believing in the spiritual attainment of the Buddha. In the terms of the preceding passage from the Samyutta Nikāya, Buddhist faith is to replace "my" ego by the "other" ego which forever remains undisturbed by external threats and inward stirrings, and through the strength of which all is prevented from ever going astray in his life.

### III

Allusion was made, in one of the previous quotations from the Dīgha Nikāya (in Pali) and from the Chinese Samyukta Āgama, XXXIV, to those householders who are leading a life of pleasure. These were mentioned as also belonging to the membership of the Buddhist community, they are good Buddhists just as much as those householders who are practising a life of purity. The Chinese Āgama (雜阿含三十四) is more explicit as to the particulars of a "life of pleasure."

We read thus: "There are not only one or two or

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\* Samyutta Nikāya, LV, p. 37.

Kittāvatā nu kho bhante upāsako hoti ti|| Yato kho Mahānāma  
Buddham saranam gacce hoti|| Dhamman saranam gacce hoti||  
Sangham saranam gacce hoti|| ettāvatā kho Mahānāma upāsako hoti  
ti||

Kittāvatā pana bhante Upāsako saddhasampanno hoti ti||  
Idha Mahānāma Upāsako hoti saddahati Tathagatassa bodhim||

Of the following from the Vimāla-Kīrti Sūtra: 文殊師利又問生死有畏菩薩當何所依維摩詰言菩薩於生死畏中當依如來功德之力。(維摩詰所說經卷中·黃七·二二左)

three or even up to five hundred Upāsakas, but many, many more yet. They are householders married and with children, they enjoy the five pleasures, they decorate themselves with perfumery and flowers, they keep and feed maids and servants. But they have in accordance with this Law cut off the three entanglements and are weak in avarice, anger, and infatuation; they have attained the Sakridāgāmin (Coming Once) and, after being reborn once in heavens and once on earth, will end this life of suffering."

And again: "There are not only one or two or three or even up to five hundred Upāsikās, but there are many, many more yet. They are householders, they keep and feed men and women, they are used to the enjoyments of the five pleasures, they decorate themselves with perfumery and flowers. But they have in accordance with this Law put an end to the three entanglements, have attained the Śrotapanna, will not fall into the evil ways as they are definitely walking toward the Supreme Knowledge (*bodhi*)...."

The Upāsikā is a woman lay-disciple of the Buddha and the Upāsaka is a man lay-disciple, and the Buddha according to these passages from the Āgamas did not make any distinction between the two classes of his followers, as both are assured of their spiritual attainment. What is more remarkable in this connection is that all these householders with their worldly enjoyments and aspirations are not excluded from Buddhism as long as they live in accordance with the Dharma. To follow a commentator, "the five pleasures" which these lay-disciples are said to enjoy are those originating from the five senses which are colour, sound, odour, taste and touch. According to another commentator, these pleasures are those arising from property, sex, eating and drinking, reputation, and sleep. Whichever way we may understand the "five pleasures," they evidently belong to what we generally designate a worldly life.

At this juncture a question arises as to the conditions of admittance, which are required of the lay-disciples as good Buddha-followers. Was the Threefold Refuge Formula enough for them? Or did they also have to accept the five Precepts? Another way of putting this question is to inquire into the relation between spiritual strength and its practical demonstrations, or the relation between belief and behaviour; but from the practical point of view, those lay-disciples of the Buddha, who have thus eyes open to the truth of the teaching of the Buddha and are confirmed in their trust in the Three Treasures, will naturally manifest their inner strength thus gained in one form or another, in their outward lives, for instance, by observing the Five precepts set down by the Buddha for the practical guidance of their worldly life. The acceptance of the Refuge Formula will logically issue in that of the Five Precepts also.\* But how far can the worldly life of a lay-disciple be compatible with the Five Precepts? The Precepts are: 1. Do not kill; 2. Do not steal; 3. Do not commit adultery; 4. Do not lie; and 5. Do not drink liquor.

In this we see all the five pleasures except sleep put under a certain restriction. As to the precept of not killing living things, it is not necessarily the curbing of a desire, but a positive expression of compassion. If it is taken simply as a restraint, it will apply to the case of craving for animal food or hunting animals for its excitement. As regards not lying, those who have realised the truth with themselves will naturally speak out that truth, but as a prohibitive rule it

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\* Mr Makoto Nagai, of the Tokyo Imperial University, states in his recent *Studies in Primitive Buddhism*, Chapter IV, that in the Chinese Āgamas the Refuge Formula as well as the Five Precepts are mentioned as the conditions of formally being received into the Buddhist community, but that in the Pali texts except those belonging to a later period, the Refuge Formula only is prescribed. We observe, in the case of Yasa's father also, there is no mention of the Five Precepts, but only of the Refuge Formula.

applies to making money or earning a reputation by means of falsehoods.

The Five Precepts may thus be regarded as a kind of reins or bits to keep our passions under restraint; for when passions are left to run their course, one may even have to lose one's own life. The precepts are both for control and for protection, though in a sense moral rules are more than restraint, and in fact are expressions of one's inner life. When the precepts are understood to be the mere curbing of one's unruly desires by outside force, their violation does not always mean depravity or loss of faith; but if the precepts are seen in the light of one's inner life, the failure to observe them will be a great spiritual retrogression.

There was once a man of the Shakya family by the name of Hundred-Handed. He violated the fifth precept concerning liquor, but when he died, the Buddha assured his attaining the Śrotapanna and being kept away from the evil paths. As Mahānāma asked the Buddha how this was possible, the Buddha explained for him and his brethren that there are seven kinds of his disciples who are kept away from the evil paths. Then concluded the Buddha: "O Mahānāma, when Hundred-Handed of the Shakya family died, he kept his holy precepts inviolate abandoning the taking of liquor. Therefore, I say he had attained to the Śrotapanna." In spite of this man's non-observance of the fifth precept sometime in his life, he was a devout Buddhist, he believed in the Buddha as the teacher of the Holy Doctrine, he believed in the Dharma, and finally he believed in the Sangha as the congregation of the followers of the Holy Doctrine; and his belief was pure and simple. On this account, the Buddha saw in him the certainty of not falling into evil ways. (See the Samyukta-Āgama, XXXIV.) This tolerant attitude of the Buddha towards such occasionally inattentive stragglers as long as their inner faith in the Three Treasures was absolute,



conclusively proves that faith was all important and that thoughtlessness was not necessarily the cause for retrogression or loss of faith.

#### IV

When we consider Buddhism in its first stage of development, we must not forget the group of those "worldly" householder-disciples of the Buddha, who came to him with just as much devotion and reverence as the monks and nuns who constituted the main body of the Brotherhood. In all likelihood, the number of these lay-followers must have exceeded that of the homeless ones. While we have no authentic records to support our supposition in the Buddhist literature in our possession at present, it is not at all irrational to make this statement that as the Buddha extended the fields of itineration and as the Brotherhood grew larger and more influential, there must have grown around the Buddha and the Sangha quite a large congregation of "worldly" devotees, who, accepting the Refuge Formula, also looked after the material side of the monks' life. As the great spiritual leader, the Buddha's moral influence must have reached far beyond his immediate circles. He did not make it the absolute condition of enlightenment or Nirvana to abandon the home and worldly life, he put the principal strength of his teaching in accepting the Refuge Formula as the expression of faith in the Three Treasures. This was the one thing that was needed. The life of saintliness as practised by the monks and nuns was praiseworthy enough, but if the Buddha's religion did not embrace those who stood outside this holy group, it could never stir up such a powerful general spiritual revolution as it actually did even in the earlier stages of Buddhism. The greatness of the Buddha lied in fact in the universal applicability of his teaching.

There is another thing to consider concerning this group

of lay-devotees of the Buddha. What was the content of their faith in the Three Treasures? There is no doubt that this was expressed by what we now call repentance. Repentance was not the whole content of their faith which had another side more positive and energising.\* But the feelings of gratitude, shame, and humility, which are implications of the notion of repentance, must have been awakened in the heart of a lay-disciple when he or she uttered the Refuge Formula before the Buddha. "Kshama" which is rendered in Chinese by 懺悔, an hybrid word half Sanskrit and half Chinese, while not existing in the literature belonging to the so-called primitive Buddhism, has the sense of asking forgiveness of another. The lay-devotees themselves might not have been conscious of the presence of this feeling in ordinary circumstances, but in case of an extraordinary circumstance, the feeling of repentance can be distinctly read in their hearts. To take an example from the *Dīghāgama*, XVII, we have the case of king Ajataśatru.

Confessed the King: "And now I betake myself, Lord, to the Blessed One as my refuge, to the Truth, and to the Order. May the Blessed One accept me as a disciple, as one who, from this day forth, as long as life endures, has taken his refuge in them. Sin has overcome me, Lord, weak and foolish and wrong that I am, in that, for the sake of sovereignty, I put to death my father, that righteous man, that righteous king! May the Blessed One accept it of me, Lord, that do acknowledge it as a sin, to the end that in future I may restrain my self."

"Verily, O king," said the Buddha, "it was sin that overcame you in acting thus. But inasmuch as you look

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\* In the case of monks or nuns, who repented the non-observance of their rules, they used the word, *Desayati* or *Desana Karaniyā*. This has more of the idea of communicating one's faults to others of the Brotherhood and is more moral than religious.

upon it as sin, and confess according to what is right, we accept your confession as to that. For that, O king, is custom in the discipline of the noble ones, that whosoever looks upon his fault, and rightly confesses it, shall attain to self-restraint in future.”\*

In this most unusual instance, we see how the king, a great sinner, was prompted\* to come to the Buddha and confess his sin before him, and how grateful he felt in the acceptance of his confession on the part of the Buddha. The king was quite expressive in his acknowledgment of sin his was an extraordinary case; but in other cases where nothing so remarkable took place, the devotees may not be always conscious of what faults they committed. This is however a question of degrees. There must always be some consciousness of imperfection in the heart of any lay-disciple who comes to the Buddha and takes refuge in the Three Treasures. If the life of saintliness as practised by the monks and nuns is something ultimately desirable by all the followers of the Buddha, and yet if this desideratum cannot be attained by everybody because of the peculiar conditions of life in which he finds himself, he will naturally grow conscious of his shortcomings, of his being far from the ideal life prescribed by the Dharma. When a “turning” takes place in his heart and he is awakened to his own spiritual condition, the faith he thus acquires will shed light on his mortal life, and as he gets deeper into the depths of his religious consciousness, he will come more intimately in touch with the great stream

\* (Samañña-phaḍa Sutta, (The Fruits of the Life of a Recluse), *Dialogues of the Buddha*, p. 95)

爾時阿闍世王即從坐起頭面禮佛足。白佛言。唯願世尊愛我悔過。我害狂愚癡冥無識我父摩竭瓶沙王。以法治化無有偏枉。而我迷惑五欲。實害父王。唯願世尊。加哀愍。愛我悔過。佛告王曰。汝愚冥無識。但自悔過。汝迷於五欲。乃害父王。今於賢聖法中。能悔過者。即自饒益。吾恩汝故。受汝悔過。

\* *The Life of Buddha*, by Rockhill, p. 90.

漢譯。根本說一切有部毘奈耶破僧事。第十七。

running underneath all his life-activities. When this is attained, he cannot help but be grateful for this experience and at the same time feel ashamed of himself and quite humiliated. Faith thus expresses itself as repentance.

Most of the disciples had not much time to devote themselves to the study of Buddhist philosophy, nor were they so well equipped with speculative power as their brethren of the Sangha. And naturally their Buddhism was to be illustrated in a pragmatismal way, which was perhaps more in accord with the spirit of the founder. If they had their hearts purgated for once from impurities, and even if this consciousness were only a momentary affair, they would have experienced a feeling of humiliation and gratitude—gratitude because they have found the “other” ego, the Buddha-ego, in place of their own selfish one, and humiliation because their daily life is far from being ideal as set forward by their master. Therefore, when all those numerous lay-disciples leading a “life of the five pleasures” approached the Buddha and embraced from the depths of their hearts Refuge Formula, there must have been in them what we now call repentance or *kshama*. Buddhism is thus the religion of repentance.

## V

The reason for my regarding repentance as an expression of faith as awakened in the heart of the lay-disciples leading a life of pleasures, is not drawn from the single and exceptional instance of the patricide king, Ajataśatru. My point is that the feeling of repentance essentially constitutes faith, and this is seen in the Buddhist ideal of giving, giving one's self for others, that is, to benefit others by tearing oneself away from ego-centered attachments. When the Buddha was still young, he saw a farmer turning up a worm by the tip of his spade, and this worm was carried away at once by a bird. The Buddha's vision of peace was rudely shaken, and it is

said that he meditated for some time under a nearby tree on this state of mutual destruction of life. His merciful heart was stirred to its depths. How could this devouring of mutual lives be stopped? There were two ways of bringing about a state of universal peace: one was to conquer all the world by force and make all the nations observe conditions of reciprocal help; while the other was to perfect oneself spiritually and with this spiritual power to control the whole world. It is evident that the Buddha chose the second method. To make people live peacefully together it is necessary first to live peacefully with oneself. As long as one's own heart is divided against itself, there will be no hope for others to stop quarrelling among themselves. Finally, this Buddha found that the key to universal peace or the destruction of egotism could be achieved through enlightenment and love. Enlightenment will dispel the darkness of ignorance which is at the root of all evils, and love will put in practice what one has thus gained through enlightenment, that is, it teaches how to sacrifice oneself for the welfare of all sentient beings.

The Jātaka Tales are full of stories of self-sacrifice practised by the Buddha in his former lives. While yet a Bodhisattva he is said to have given himself to a tigress trying to eat her own offspring.<sup>1</sup> When he was the king of the Sibis, he gave his eyes away to an eagle.<sup>2</sup> As the lord of the deer, he gave his whole body to save a pregnant doe.<sup>3</sup> All such stories prove to show that the Buddha was conceived as love incarnate and was always for the cause of truth, peace, and humility. In fact such love was what was realised by the Buddha in the enlightenment attained under the

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<sup>1</sup> See "The Story of the Tigress" in "*Jātakamāla*," p. 2; *Suvarṇa-prabha-sūtra* (Chinese translation, Chapter XXVI.).

<sup>2</sup> See "The Story of the King of the Sibis" in *Jātakamāla*, p. 8; The Pali *Jātaka*, by Fausbøll pp. IV, 401-412, (No. 499);

<sup>3</sup> See "The Pali *Jātaka*," (No. 12). I 36-42; *Mahāvastu*, I, 361-366.

Bodhi-tree, and at least a partial realisation of such love is what Buddhists ask of all sentient beings to attain for the sake of peace and humanity.

For the lay-disciples enjoying a life of pleasures, it is quite hard to follow the steps of the Buddha. While they are in the world, they may have to compete with other fellow-beings, they may conceive such an idea without realising what it actually means. The same thing can be said of the other moral rules set down by the Buddha for the observance of his lay-disciples. They have not yet freed themselves, for instance, from avarice, anger, and infatuation, as their brethren in the Sangha. From the highly idealistic point of view, to violate the precept against stealing, and to hate others is to hurt and murder them. While these may remain merely subjective and do not issue in conduct, they are, just the same, manifestations of impure feelings. What we commit with mouth or body is comparatively guiltless, what goes on in our inner soul is far more important and deciding from the religious point of view. When the lay-disciples grow conscious of this fact through the light they have obtained from their faith in the Buddha, there will inevitably rise in them a feeling of shame and humility. Is not their way of living far from the ideal they have set for themselves? Does not the Buddha appear to them so far above their reach? Do they not hear so much of the life of austerity and sanctity led by many of the Bhikshus and Bhikshunis? All these practical examples within their knowledge are sure to make them reflect within themselves. Instead of communicating to their fellow-devotees, as the Bhikshus do in the Brotherhood, their faults, or their particular instances of non-observance of the precepts, they will awaken in themselves a deeper religious feeling which will elevate their hearts more and more towards the Buddha. In other words, their consciousness of sin will ever lead them up from darkness to light and joy. The prog-

ress will be a never-ending one inasmuch as the love of the Buddha knows no bounds. This is where the faith of the lay-disciples religiously differs from that of the Brethren, the homeless ones.

## VI

Having followed thus far the path of faith pursued by the lay-disciples or householders leading a life of pleasure, I am almost surprised to find myself explaining the faith as embraced by the devotees of the Shin Sect. They are the waves of one and the same ocean. The saviour of the *Sukhāvati-vyūha-Sūtra* was originally a Bodhisattva known as Dharmakara who had disciplined himself throughout a long kalpa of time in love and patience and humility. He walked the same road as the Buddha in the *Jātaka Tales*, he is of the same personality as the Buddha as Saviour. He was the object of faith for Shinran. He is not a being who created the world and will send sinners into the everlasting fire; but it is he who will not attain to the supreme enlightenment unless all beings are finally saved from evil ways. We often imagine that the ancient lay-disciples, worldly followers of Buddhism, took refuge in the Buddha as a mortal being, but in fact their object of faith was not the corporeal Buddha who entered Nirvana at the age of eighty, he was the Dharmakāya\* serenely abiding outside the reach of death. If otherwise, the faith of the householders would have been merely an affair of

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\* In the *Ekottara-Āgama* (Chinese translation, Chapter XXVIII), we have the following: When the Buddha descended from the heavens to Sankassa, his followers and lay-disciples came out to greet him. The Venerable Subhūti, however, was mending his robe at Mount Gridhrakūta and was not among the welcoming crowd. He thought, "What is the true form of the Buddha? Is that his eye, his ear, etc? Is that the four elements making up his body? All these things are empty. I therefore take refuge in the reality of the Dharma." When the Buddha saw Bhikṣhuni Rengé in the form of cakravartī who was the first person to meet him, he said, I have already been greeted by Subhūti."

short duration and would not have had such a force as to revolutionalise their whole system of thought. That the Dharma is an eternal truth we need not make special reference. Even the Sangha could not be a passing event, because it bespeaks an eternally harmonious order of the world. The Three Treasures thus stand in the eyes of the Buddhists as symbolisation of values, or are three aspects of one faith. And this faith obtained in our everyday life by the turning of thought even for a moment from its old worn-out groove of egoism expresses itself as reverence, humility, and repentance.

It goes without saying that Shinran bases his teaching on the Sukhāvati-Vyūha-Sūtra in emphasising Amida's Original Vows of salvation, but he is not always hampered by the scriptural authority, he goes right into the gist of the matter by declaring that "To take refuge in Amida is His solemn command to come to Him through His original vows." That is, one's taking refuge in the Triratna is the Buddha's voice itself demanding us to come. We are here in a mystical, transcendental world and not in our everyday logical world. In this transcendental world there is no dualism of subject and object but their absolute unity. When the calling voice of the Buddha is heard in one's heart, it is the time he takes refuge in the Triratna ; and his heart is the heart of the Buddha. As this experience comes up from the depths of our consciousness where is no distinction of ego and non-ego, we feel as if it came from nowhere, that is, from somewhat not ourselves. In this sense faith is something given us by another.

When I referred to the lay-disciples's faith in the Buddha, I stated that it consisted in repentance. The same can be said of Shinran's faith ; read the following from his Psalms :

" Though I seek my refuge in the true faith of the Pure Land,  
 Yet hath not mine heart been truly sincere.  
 Deceit and untruth are in my flesh,  
 And in my soul is no clear shining." (327)



“Too strong for me is the evil of my heart.  
 I can not overcome it.  
 Therefore is my soul like unto the poison of serpents,  
 Even my righteous deeds, being mingled with this poison, must be  
 named the deeds of deceitfulness.” (329)

“Shameless though I be and having no truth in my soul,  
 Yet the virtue of the Holy Name, the gift of Him that is enlightened,  
 Is spread throughout the world through my words being as I am.” (330)

Words of such devotion can be found everywhere in his writings. He had a feeling of the utmost humiliation, and yet at the same time his heart was one with the Buddha-heart, it participated in the spiritual experience of the Buddha when his eye of enlightenment was opened. Shinran was firmly convinced in his belief that those who have faith once awakened in the Buddha would never retrogress into the evil ways but would ultimately obtain enlightenment. And this was what the Buddha himself assured the lay-disciples who had once taken refuge in the Three Treasures; for they had realised the first fruit of enlightenment and would never get into the evil paths. However agitated and troubled their superficial mind may appear to them, their inmost consciousness where faith is firmly embedded will know of no disturbance.

The teaching of Shinran has been hitherto considered so distinctly separated from primitive Buddhism, historically as well as dogmatically; it has often been pointed out that there was no documentary and psychological continuation of development between the Shin literature and the Āgamas. But as we have so far seen in the inner and psychological analysis of the faith as embraced by the lay-disciples in the Three Treasures, all these imaginary gaps are filled up; there is an unbroken continuation and development of the religious attitude which was once assumed by the primitive Buddhists. It is true that the form in which this religious attitude is express-

ed, for instance, in the *Sukhāvatī vyūha*, differed widely from the earlier writings, but there is no doubt that in this the religious minds have depicted in an unmistakable manner the evangelical aspect of the Buddha's spiritual experience. The experience itself goes far deeper and permits no literary interpretation, but as we trace its effects to express itself in adequate words, we find many ardent spirits struggling to bring out the inner meaning of the Buddha-heart. Shinran was truly the culmination of all these effects and struggles, in which the real Buddha was boldly delineated. That such a long period had to expire before this consummation by Shinran, was partly due to the predominance of an intellectual interpretation of the Buddha's personality. When the Buddha is more humanly understood, the inner relationship between the Buddha and Shinran will grow more apparent.\*

SHUGAKU YAMABE

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